

A PROPOSAL FOR LEXINGTON CONSERVATORY THEATRE'S 1980

SUBSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN

I. Why a subscription campaign? A subscription campaign will develop a loyal audience for the entire 1980 season, it will increase our financial security and pave the road for a situation in which everyone can be on salary, it will attract the kind of steady theatre-goers who are excellent targets for our fundraising efforts, it will increase the number of subscriber/supporters who will very likely attend our gala and spend money, it will deliver us from our slavish dependence on single ticket buyers who rarely show up for our world premieres and lesser known plays -- just when we need them!, it will provide a much needed cash flow before the season begins, it will guarantee (if we reach our goal of 700 subscribers) an average 48% capacity house without selling a single individual ticket, it will change our fundraising goals, it will refocus our efforts and cash outlays needed to promote individual plays, it will encourage single ticket buyers to become subscribers when they see how well subscribers are treated..., it will help us get through attendance slumps, it will show grants and fundraising organizations, and individual donors, how dramatic our audience growth has been, and how much we deserve their support, it will boost the morale of the entire company -- not to mention our loyal Advisors and volunteers, it will minimize the bad effects that less than favorable reviews can have on the size of our audiences -- a large subscription audience will see us through our critical 'flops', it will help develop a loyal audience willing to experiment with us on world premieres such as "Grinder's Stand," it will decrease the cost of future subscription campaigns and it will raise LCT's standing in the community.

II. LCT's 1980 SUBSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN GOALS

1. RENEWALS - approx. 70% of past subscribers renew. We need to send a renewal letter to each past subscriber at the very beginning of the campaign -- before our 1980 brochure is ready -- asking them to respond immediately by sending a check..... yields 70 subscribers
2. BROCHURE RETURNS - first mailing to 10,000 people on our lists yields an average $\frac{1}{2}\%$ return with two subscriptions per reply, follow up phone calls needed..... yields 100 subscribers
3. SUBSCRIPTION PARTIES - sale of 5 pairs of subscriptions at each of 5 parties..... yields 50 subscribers
4. MAILINGS TO FRIENDS OF ADVISORS/VOLUNTEERS - 35% return on 100 brochures and letters mailed with an average 2 orders per reply..... yields 70 subscribers
5. DOOR TO DOOR AND TELEPHONE CAMPAIGNS - should be preceded by publicity so people expect to be contacted. Sale of 2 subscriptions to 4% of 250 people reached..... yields 20 subscribers
6. BLOC SALES -sale of 5 subscriptions each to 5 corporations, businesses or organizations..... yields 25 subscriptions
7. SPECIAL LETTER TO SUBSCRIBERS - letter to renewing and new subscribers asking them to find additional subscribers among their family and friends - projected 15% of 100 subscribers will find 2 more subscribers each..... yields 30 subscribers

8. BROCHURE RETURNS - SECOND MAILING - brochure mailed again to 10,000 names on our lists. Statistics show that many potential subscribers don't subscribe unless they are inundated with material. Follow up phone calls needed for maximum return.... yields 100 subscribers

9. RECRUITMENT OF SUBSCRIBERS - ask our most faithful subscribers - 25 of them - to sell 2 pairs of subscriptions each..... yields 100 subscribers

10. DOANATED SUBSCRIPTIONS - ask donors to buy subscriptions which will be earmarked for the elderly, needy, etc...these can be distributed through the Greene County Dept for the Aging, various senior citizen groups, etc...projected 35 donors buy 1 subscription each..... yields 35 subscribers

11. PREVIEW PERFORMANCE AT LCT - the pros and cons of this idea must be discussed. We would invite area theatre fans and friends of advisors, volunteers etc...(who haven't yet bought a subscription) to a preview performance of our 1st play. This is a last ditch effort and must be carefully planned. A reception would also be held..... yields 50 subscribers

12. CONVERSION OF SINGLE TICKET BUYERS - sale of 2 subscriptions each to 15 single ticket buyers. This tactic is used at the box office during our first 2 weeks..... yields 30 subscribers

13. STUDENT SUBSCRIPTIONS - area high school and college English and Drama teachers are approached to spread the word about the BIG discounts available to students..... yields 20 subscribers

TOTAL NUMBER OF SUBSCRIBERS FOR OUR 1980 SEASON.....700 SUBSCRIBERS

III.a WHAT WILL REACHING OUR GOAL MEAN IN TERMS OF AUDIENCE SIZE? By reaching our goal we will have guaranteed an average house size of 58 without selling a single individual ticket (based on 120 seating capacity). We will, therefore, be playing to an average 48% capacity house without selling a single individual play ticket. By figuring a 20% increase in single ticket sales on top of our 700 subscribers, we will certainly be playing to full houses opening and Saturday nights, plus an average 80 to 90% capacity house on other nights and matinees.

III.b WHAT WILL REACHING OUR GOAL MEAN IN TERMS OF DOLLARS? The sale of 700 subscriptions at an average of \$35 each means an income of \$24,500. We estimate total costs of the campaign to be \$4,500 at this time. Therefore, our net profit is estimated at \$20,000.

IV. WHAT CAN THE BOARD OF ADVISORS DO TO HELP?

1. advise us on the development of our subscription brochure
2. help us get selective mailing lists such as members of arts councils, museums, libraries, lists of doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc..
3. enlist volunteers
4. bloc sales -- help sell to businesses etc.... in your area
5. hold subscription parties, inviting 10 or more couples
6. send subscription brochure and a personal letter to all your area friends and associates who aren't yet subscribers. Urge them to subscribe and enclose a SASE. The return address should be yours, so in this way you are letting them know YOU will be aware of whether they respond.
9. call your friends and remind them to subscribe.